

# **Harpswell Planning Board Meeting**

## **Minutes of November 20, 2002**

**Approved 12-18-02**  
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**Attendance:** James Henderson-Chairman, John Papacosma-Vice-Chairman, Don Rogers, Dorothy D. Carrier, Noel Musson - Planner, Karen O'Connell-Recording Secretary.

The meeting had been advertised in the Times Record, videotaped, broadcast live on Harpswell TV, and recorded. Chairman Henderson called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M., introduced above members and staff and led the pledge of allegiance. Henderson then reviewed general Board procedures and the agenda for the evening.

### **Approval of Minutes -**

**Motion - The minutes of October 16 were approved with several adjustments.**

**(Motion by Carrier and seconded by Rogers - Carried 4-0)**

### **02-11-01 - Northeast Civil Solutions for Verizon New England , Property Owner -Douglas Adams, 1730 Harpswell Neck Road.**

Site Visit - Chairman Henderson reported that a site visit by Board members had taken place on Monday November 18 at 8:00 A.M. and that Board members, Henderson, Papacosma, and Nannen along with Noel Musson, Town Planner and Mr. Jim Fisher representing Verizon were present.

Presentation by Applicant - Jim Fisher of Northeast Solutions representing Verizon New England introduced another representative present, Isaiah Plante, and explained that a fiber optic switching station was being proposed. He noted the Public Utilities Commission directs phone companies to upgrade systems in such a way that any one picking up the phone can get a line out. He indicated this is an assurance that people can make emergency calls when needed. He reported the company is upgrading the Austin Point Road area of Harpswell. Fisher explained that Northeast Civil Solutions, action on behalf of Verizon, is seeking approval to construct two small switching stations on a 60' x 60' easement off Harpswell Neck Road.

In response to questions from Board members, Fisher indicated there will be no lighting involved, no towers or antennas and no sound involved. He explained the purpose of the two cabinets is for signal switching and that this upgrade is needed as a Verizon Engineer has determined summer usage in this area is growing and crowding the existing system.

Fisher explained the company works to request easements off the road right of way and negotiates with property owners and the State Department of Transportation for access to place the cabinets. Fisher indicated he had worked with the previous Town Planner last year and his final step for approval was to appear before this Town Planning Board in anticipation of construction most likely next spring.

Board Discussion - Henderson reported that the site was a generally flat, open area with no shrubbery and there had been discussion at the site about the appearance and screening of the cabinets. Henderson indicated the site seemed to be set back far enough from the road and abutting property. Fisher confirmed the cabinets will be placed 40 feet off the road. Henderson indicated there is a small cistern existing at the site and this will be filled in.

Henderson and the Board reviewed Section 15 of the Site Plan Review Ordinance. Papacosma clarified the cement pad on which the cabinets would be placed was 10 by 20 feet. Henderson asked to clarify whether a permit for access to the Road was in place. Fisher indicated they had worked with the Department of Transportation. Musson indicated the necessary permit is on file.

Henderson in reviewing Section 15 indicated most items were not at issue or did not apply. He indicated there was no development or internal traffic circulation and that parking spaces are immaterial as there is no continuous parking. Storm water management was briefly reviewed and Fisher indicated they assure that storm

water does not flow toward the road or abutter. Papacosma noted the slope of the area was generally away from the road. Board members confirmed that access to overhead lines was underground and that there would be no lighting involved. Henderson confirmed there would be no hazardous materials to impact groundwater and Fisher indicated this would not be an issue. Henderson indicated the Board could assume that Verizon had the financial capacity for this size project.

The Board focused a discussion on buffering the project. Isaiah Plante, project representative indicated they would place reasonable landscape/buffering plantings. He indicated a typical plan is two or three rows of staggered plantings. Board members discussed their concerns over assurances for buffering given in the past and inadequate results. The Board discussed that there was already a natural buffer in the neighbor's direction. Plante responded that they would place enough plantings to cover the box. Henderson indicated he would like to place a condition on approval related to landscape buffering that would be similar to that shown on the plan. Fisher indicated he wanted to camouflage the site as much as possible and was willing to go on record that they would plant white cedar/arbor vitae trees no more than 10 feet apart and at least five to eight feet tall. He indicated this was a good height for tree survival.

**Motion - The Board determines the application is complete and approves the application subject to the condition of a screening plantings agreement which stipulates that white cedar would be planted no more than 10 feet apart and with plantings being at least five to eight feet tall. (Motion by Henderson and seconded by Rogers - Vote 4-0 to approve)**

### **Planner Update**

Proposed Ordinance Changes - Musson reported that the Selectmen had decided not to go forward with some of the recently proposed ordinance changes. The technical changes would probably be brought to Town meeting but they would not recommend on the subdivision changes discussed at the Public Meeting at this time. Musson indicated there was more work to be done on other ordinance changes to assure a more coordinated approach.

Musson indicated there were other ordinance changes being worked on including such items as seasonal structures, flood plain ordinance, roads ordinance and driveway standards.

Planning Budget - Musson reported the Planning Office budget includes support for 14 Planning Board Meetings, advertising, binders, and funds for member training.

Board Training - Henderson indicated the training budget was worthwhile. Papacosma indicated he felt the few hours currently offered was not sufficient time for training and felt a whole day could be devoted to this. Carrier suggested it may be a good idea for Musson to suggest to the Maine Municipal Association that Board Member training be extended to a whole day. Musson noted how free Brunswick workshops have been very helpful. Papacosma indicated it is helpful to meet with people from other Towns wrestling with similar issues. Rogers indicated he had a set of Kittery Ordinances that could be shared for information. Papacosma indicated the Manual received at a recent training showed a way to streamline the site review process and thought the Board could benefit from a workshop on this topic. The Board briefly discussed with Musson methods to streamline the process to allow the Board to concentrate on key issues. The Board complimented Musson on his work to date.

**Motion to adjourn (Motion by Rogers and seconded by Carrier - Vote Carried 4-0)**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen O'Connell, Recording Secretary